

# Omega-3 Fatty Acids in the Treatment of Depression

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This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application entitled "Omega-3 Fatty Acids and Omega-3 Phosphatidylcholine in the Treatment of Bipolar Disorder", filed February 5, 2002, using Express Mail No.: ET796587916US, which is a 5 continuation of U.S. Serial No. 09/269,361, filed March 22, 1999, now issued as US Patent No.. 6,344,482, which claims priority from PCT/US97/06712, filed April 23, 1997. The contents of all of these applications are incorporated herein by reference.

## Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to medical treatments for psychiatric disorders. 10 More specifically, it is concerned with novel methods and compositions for treating patients with unipolar major depression.

## Background of the Invention

Major depression is a neuropsychiatric illness characterized by a persistently low mood or diminished interests in one's surroundings, accompanied by at least several of 15 the following symptoms: Reduced energy and motivation, difficulty concentrating, altered sleep and appetite, and at times, suicidal ideation (American Psychiatric Association: *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, ed. 4. Washington, American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Major depression without a history of abnormally elevated mood and energy (mania) is termed "unipolar major depression." 20 However, a sizeable proportion of depressed patients presenting for treatment have bipolar disorder (also known as manic depressive illness), where there is a history of mania, or a milder form of mood elevation known as hypomania (Goodwin FK, Jamison KR: *Manic Depressive Illness*. London, Oxford University Press, 1990). Whether part of a unipolar or a bipolar illness, major depression is associated with high rates of 25 morbidity and mortality, with suicide rates of 10-25% (Kaplan HI, Sadock BJ (eds): *Synopsis of Psychiatry*. Baltimore, Williams & Wilkins, 1998, p. 866). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), major depression is the fourth leading cause of